

# THE LABOUR ORGANISER

No. 40

MARCH, 1924

Price 4d.

## OUT OF THE RUT

### IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES IN BRIEF

We should like to draw our readers' special attention to the illustration of a Labour Party certificate advertised on another page. We have before us as we write a specimen of the certificate, and can unhesitatingly say it is far and away the best and most tasteful and appealing certificate of the kind which we have seen. The suggestive design is enhanced by the quality of the printing and we think that this certificate is one which should be widely taken up by Local Labour Parties seeking to increase their numbers and to give their members something whereby they may be reminded of their membership and taught to value it. We understand that the certificate has already been adopted with advantage by a number of Scotch constituencies, and that the photographs and wording may be altered to suit local conditions. At the present time many Local Parties are considering what shall be the form of their certificate, and this should be a timely intimation. Secretaries would be well advised to send for a specimen copy and other particulars in order that the same should be in front of their Executives before or at their annual meetings. The printers and publishers are David Watt & Sons, Douglas Street, Dunfermline.

A Bazaar Fund of £900 actually in existence a month or so before the Bazaar opens is surely a distinct novelty and an unprecedented success as a Labour effort. We have received the following supplemental information from Councillor J. S. Bryan, Secretary and Registration Agent of the Spen Valley Divisional Labour Party, and we are sure that very much of the credit is due to this capable officer for his devoted work in connection with the Bazaar:—

"This effort is now drawing to a close and promises to be a great financial success. We have now £900 in the Bazaar Club. We shall reach the £1,000 before the time, and then there will be also those who have not

paid into the Bazaar Club who intend to spend some money at the Bazaar. I therefore estimate that our receipts will be between £1,200 and £1,300. I do not wish to mislead your readers that this will be all profit. I think they will understand as well as we do that in the short space of 15 months in a purely working class organisation, it is almost impossible to raise sufficient money to buy goods to meet this large amount without using some of the Club money—although we have done exceedingly well. All sorts of methods have been used in raising money, such as whist drives, dances, coffee suppers, pie suppers, teas, concerts, selling of peas, toffee and chocolate, and scent cards, guessing competitions. One thing I would like to say, and that is *if we did not make £100* we could still declare the effort a huge success, because of the enthusiasm and interest it has created. It is simply marvellous, and this is bound to have its effect on our political activities. The Bazaar takes place on Easter Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday, in Cleckheaton Town Hall—the largest in the Division. It will be opened by Mr. Myers, Mrs. K. B. Glasier, and Alderman B. Turner, M.P.

"The Hall will be decorated by Womersley's, of Leeds, and will represent an Olde English Village. The stalls will be named accordingly, and will consist of Plain and Fancy Sewing, Hardware, Sweet, Fruit and Flower, Refreshment Stall; also a Pound Stall (each member of the party is asked to give a pound of something, so that all will be profit on this stall). Cafe and Tea Room will also be provided, also Smoke Room, and the usual side-shows, such as Bran Tub, Mechanical Fishing Pond, and Concerts. Our ladies are now busy collecting the Club money and making up the garments. We are all busy, as it is a great undertaking, but I believe we shall be fully repaid, as we shall have a good balance with which to carry on our work, and thus help us to win back Spen Valley for Labour.





Supplementing the accounts of the Aberavon Divisional Labour Party we have to hand a very interesting Balance Sheet of the Labour Fair held on May 5th last year. We have not previously published a similar balance sheet, and we have pleasure, therefore, in recounting the details as below, from which it will be seen that the handsome profit of £114 16s. 7d. resulted.

*Amounts realised at the various Stalls.*

	£	s.	d.
Grocery Stall ..	3	8	8½
Second-hand Stall ..	3	13	9
Drinks and Refreshments	5	17	7
Sweet Stall and Notepaper	6	8	1
Outfitting .. ..	8	10	3
Drapery .. ..	8	14	5
Fancy Goods and Hardware	3	8	8
Boots .. ..	3	18	0
Photograph Stall ..	27	4	9
Books .. ..	5	3	10
Houp-la .. ..	4	6	2½
Side Shows, Fortune Telling and Weighing Machine	4	5	0
Shooting Gallery ..	1	18	7
Taken at the door ..	15	13	0
Gifts .. ..	18	0	0
Prize Drawing at the Fair, for Pictures, Violin, etc.	12	15	8
<b>Total Receipts ..</b>	<b>£133</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

*Expenses.*

	£	s.	d.
Photo Frames and Timber for erecting Stalls ..	6	2	6
Hire of Baths .. ..	2	2	0
Photographs (Walter Scott, Bradford) .. ..	3	2	0
Tax Tickets .. ..	3	8	8
Fixing and conveying Goods to the Baths .. ..	2	0	0
Billposting and Advertising	17	6	
Hire of Piano and Hire of China .. ..	17	3	
<b>Total .. ..</b>	<b>£18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Making a total profit of</b>	<b>£114</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>

The above result is, of course, highly creditable to Councillor J. A. Brown, the Organising Secretary to the Prime Minister's own Division. Another effort by Mr. Brown, which has not yet secured the publicity which it deserves, was the organisation of a Grand Prize Draw on behalf of Casey, which realised a total of £534, of which £350 was nett profit. The Aberavon Divisional

Labour Party are in many respects proving themselves worthy of the responsibility which all Labour looks to them to maintain. The General Election result was in every way a credit and especially so when it is noted that the Election Fund of £750 was practically all the result of local effort and energy. On another page we are able to produce this month a striking cartoon which was printed in two colours and must have proved very effective. The wording is reminiscent of some huge posters issued by the editor in an important election a few years ago, in which the message ran "The eyes of the world are on —" These posters were written in colour supplemented by a pair of penetrating eyes which held the passer-by in tense attention.

The Barrow Labour Party has launched a scheme for the creation of a Local Parliamentary Election Fund by which sympathisers may contribute what they can afford per week. Regular collections are to be arranged, and even the widow's mite is not to be despised by the weekly callers. The details of the scheme are as follows:—

"All Labour sympathisers are asked to sign their names at the bottom of this leaflet, promising to pay a small weekly sum, to create and maintain a General Election Fund to finance Labour Candidates for Barrow. To enable supporters to contribute according to their means, they are offered the choice of three scales of payment, i.e., *One farthing per week*; *One Halfpenny per week*; and *One Penny per week*. Collectors will be appointed to call at the homes of persons who have signed their names. To make these payments easy, we propose to call upon persons weekly who have signed for one Penny. Those who have promised one Halfpenny will be called upon fortnightly, and those who have signed for one Farthing, monthly. Times of calling can be arranged to suit the wishes of subscribers.

"We ask persons who cannot afford to pay more than one farthing weekly, not to hesitate to sign for that small sum, because if every Labour sympathiser contributed one farthing per week, our financial position would be secure.

"Collectors who call for contributions will give special stamps as receipt for the amount received."

## AN INTERESTING MUNICIPAL ELECTION PETITION

On the 28th February a petition was heard in the High Court before Mr. Justice Horridge and Mr. Justice Avory, against the return of a candidate named William Windsor, who was declared elected for the Finsbury Park Ward of the Borough of Hornsey, at the late November Election.

The facts were briefly reported in our issue for December last, when it appeared that Mr. G. F. V. Cutting, the petitioner, was the Labour nominee, and Mr. Windsor was the nominee of the Municipal Reformers. It was alleged that a nomination paper was presented on behalf of Windsor during the proper hours, but that such was not subscribed by eight assentors, and that the said paper was withdrawn. It was further alleged that after the time for delivery of nomination papers a paper was brought in the Town Clerk's office and was accepted by the Town Clerk. Objection to this late nomination was duly made in writing during the time for objections.

Mr. W. R. Southard, the solicitor of the Railway Clerks' Association, of 25, Euston Road, N.W.4, was solicitor to the petitioner. Mr. Willoughby Williams appeared on behalf of petitioner for whom the seat was claimed, and Sir Hugh Fraser appeared for the respondent.

Sir Hugh Fraser argued that it was in the discretion of the Court whether or not they should grant relief to his client. It could not be suggested that the result of the election had been affected, as his client was elected by a majority of 296 votes.

Mr. Justice Avory, in giving his judgment, said the question really resolved itself into whether the respondent was or was not duly nominated at the election. The Municipal Corporations' Act, 1882, Section 55, required that the nomination of the candidates for the office of councillor should be conducted in accordance with certain rules. One of those rules required that every nomination paper, duly subscribed with the names of proposer and seconder and eight assentors, must be delivered by the candidate or his proposer or seconder at the Town Clerk's office seven days at least before the date of the election, and before five p.m. on the last day for the delivery of

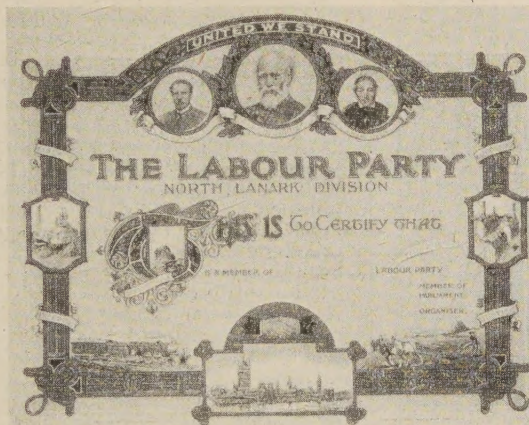
nomination papers. It was clear that that rule was not complied with. Sir Hugh Fraser had relied upon Section 72 of the Act, which provided that an election should not be invalid because of non-compliance with rules mentioned if it appeared to the Court, having cognisance of the question, that the election was conducted in accordance with the principles laid down in the body of the Act. Sir Hugh said that if it should appear to the Court that the irregularity was one which could not have affected the result of the election, the Court ought to hold that the election had been conducted in accordance with the principles of the Act. While he assented to that proposition, the judge was quite unable to hold that in this case the irregularity was one which could not have affected the result of the election. He pointed out that it was quite open for any persons who were interested in the matter to inquire at the Town Clerk's office at five o'clock on the last day for the receipt of nomination papers and inquire how many persons had been nominated, and who they were. Any such inquiries would have resulted in the answer that only one person had been nominated, viz., the respondent, and that information given to an elector or any body of electors might have seriously affected the results of the election. The rule regarding the time within which nomination papers duly subscribed must be delivered was mandatory, and it was not within the discretion of the Town Clerk to receive after that time a nomination paper, and it was not competent for that Court to say that a nomination paper delivered after the prescribed time constituted a good nomination. "The respondent, in my opinion," concluded the Judge, "was never duly nominated at all, and his election must therefore be void, and the result is that the petitioner, who is the only other candidate, must be declared to have been duly elected."

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### URGENT.

Copies of the January issue urgently wanted. Will any subscriber who has surplus copies on hand please be good enough to send same to the Editor? Full allowance will be given.



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## THE SECRETARY'S PAGE

### HELP AND HINTS IN SEASON

One of the minor points of doubt that arise in the course of the conduct of local Labour Party business is the position that shall be allotted to "elected persons" on the Executive or General Committee of the Party. In the early days of most local movements—some of them not so very long gone by—a Town Councillor, a District Councillor, or even a Guardian was something of a *rara avis*. We prized our councillors and almost doted on them, and even a Rural Councillor was more likely than not addressed as Mr. Coun. —. Most local Labour Parties in this stage of development passed resolutions or made rules conferring an *ex officio* membership of the General Committee on all elected persons, and in some cases an *ex officio* place on the Executive of the Party was also given.

elected persons a delicate position is arising in many places, particularly where elected persons were made *ex officio* members of the Executive. What was an excellent policy in the early stages of development now threatens to become an evil and in some places the elected persons do actually possess an improper preponderance on the Executive. What is the remedy?

That elected persons should occupy a special and privileged position in the Party goes without saying. A real danger to the democratic conduct of the Party, however, threatens when the number of elected persons is such as to materially alter the elective and delegative basis of the Party. Consultation and the closest possible connection between members on public bodies and the administrative body of the Party is an essential thing, and the principle underlying the privileges that have been accorded is a sound one. It seems to

Now with the advent of success and a substantial increase in the number of

us, however, that membership of the General Committee would in most cases meet the point without the additional privilege of membership of the Executive. This point, however, like many others, must be considered in relation to the peculiar local situation of the case being considered. Thus if there are only one or two elected persons advantage may accrue from their presence on the Executive whereas if there were a dozen of them then the tail might very well sway the dog. Taken altogether, we would advise that where elected persons are few their presence on the Executive is an advantage, but where there are many of them steps should be taken to limit their number by some process of selection; and perhaps as a general rule in no case should their number exceed 25% of the whole body.

The point raised involves also the whole question of consultation between elected persons and the Party concerning both public business and Party organisation, in which both sides have a special interest. It raises also the question of proper consultation between elected persons themselves concerning business that will come before them in their public capacity. The point is not new, but with the advance of Labour it presents itself in a fresh aspect every now and again. The same problem is now being felt in the House of Commons itself, where the existence of a Labour Cabinet adds a further complication to it. We have several times urged in the "Labour Organiser" the formation of Labour groups on public bodies with regular consultation both between the members of the groups and candidates to the same bodies, and the time appears ripe for a much better understanding generally of what is required. We do not think the whole point is gained where public representatives are members of local Executives. Specific consultation among themselves is also necessary, together with specific representation of local Party interests in those deliberations—not to mention the point we have raised as to candidates being given their opportunity. In some towns Town Council groups are officered by the permanent officials of the local Party itself, and this arrangement has its advantages. It is difficult to lay down any general rule as to what

is best for all circumstances, but every Party should endeavour to arrange that the following essential points are covered in their relationship with elected persons, i.e., (1) That elected persons do hold consultations among themselves concerning public business and that such consultations are open to candidates and specified representatives of the Party. (2) That elected representatives on their part possess opportunities for attending Party meetings and helping to frame questions of policy, and that due opportunity be given them for the presentation of reports. The precise manner in which these provisions may be enacted is entirely a matter for local settlement, but it is as well that any rule made should come up for future revision, because it is not likely that in a growing Party one can legislate on such points as these in a manner to provide for all future exigencies.

Another point of difficulty which frequently presents itself at the annual meetings is the position of persons who were elected last year as Executive members, but who have since ceased to be the delegates to the General Committee of any one of the affiliated bodies. The point is frequently presented that such persons have no title to be present at the annual meeting, and it is sometimes suggested that they have automatically dropped out. We do not agree, and if the submission just made were correct a very grave defect would creep into our organisation. It is perfectly true that at general meetings delegates come as the representatives of the affiliated and component bodies. When, however, the Executive is elected that body are the representatives of and responsible to the General Committee, and in their capacity as Executive members an entirely new relationship has been set up. An Executive member is directly responsible to the General Committee and only indirectly responsible to his own organisation.

Executive business also is the business of the Party, and some delegates here again require to be set right, for Executive business is the confidential business of the Party, and may only be reported to affiliated organisations when such is made public for the General Committee.



On the question of the attendance of an Executive member at the annual meeting it is obvious that if he had ceased to be a delegate and his presence was therefore denied no report of his year's responsibilities might conceivably be given to the meeting. In our opinion an Executive member remains in office up to and until the period of a fresh election of officers, and his attendance therefore at the annual meeting is not only desirable but obligatory. He would not, of course, be entitled to re-election unless attending as a delegate, but commonsense and business precaution necessitate his presence all the same.

An increasing number of local Labour Parties now publish their annual reports and balance sheets in printed form. Secretaries should endeavour to secure the duplication of their balance sheets for the use of those attending the annual meeting, and immediately the meeting is over no time should be lost in putting the report in the printer's hands. An early presentation of the report and balance sheet is always a good advertisement, and adds to the importance of the body concerned. In the case of local Labour Parties in county divisions in some cases the publication of their report and balance sheet is best embodied in the printed report of the Divisional Labour Party, though there are instances, of course, where a separate publication is desirable. This applies also to the reports of Divisional Labour Parties in divided boroughs. In any case Divisional Labour Parties and Borough Labour Parties should not forget in their reports the importance of embodying statements from the lesser parties, for there is much to be gained by their inclusion. In any case a copy of the annual report should be immediately sent to the Labour Party and the "Labour Organiser."

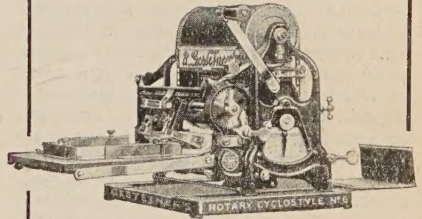
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## SOME LESSONS OF THE GENERAL ELECTION

BY THE EDITOR

### ARTICLE I.

The General Election of December, 1923, was in two respects a historical one. In the first place, it is at least an event to note when the leader of a powerful Party with a substantial majority and several years of Parliamentary power in front of him, voluntarily throws up the sponge in a vain gamble at the polls. That episode was unprecedented. The second, and, of course, infinitely more important historical aspect of the election was the triangular equilibrium of the outcome, resulting in the opportunity being given, for the first time in our national life, to a Labour Premier to form a Cabinet.

One of the phenomena of the election, of interest to electioneers of all Parties, was the unexpected resilience displayed by the Labour forces. There seems no doubt about it that the old Premier and his Party had deliberately calculated on the Labour Party being unable to make a good show at the polls, both from financial reasons and because they were assumed to be unprepared. There was a good deal of justification for these beliefs, and they were actually shared in by quite a substantial number of our own adherents, and the surprise of the election was the extent to which these calculations were falsified. After the election of 1922, Trades Union political effort had certainly decreased. There was a withdrawal of many candidates and considerable slackness in putting forward any new ones. Many quarters were imbued with the notion that Baldwin's Ministry would last for at least four years, and the voice of the "Labour Organiser" in depreciation of this demoralising assumption was as a voice crying in the wilderness. The selection of candidates during 1922 was also a slow and tardy progress.

These were matters which no Party could keep to itself. Our opponents knew the position. The first moral of the election then is, as stated, the remarkable resilience of Labour's political forces. Though apparently dormant in many constituencies, there needed but one breath of another General Election to galvanise the whole forces of Labour into life. We do not

wish to depreciate the immense credit that was due to the Head Office of the Party for the feverish activities in all directions which was crowded into the few weeks of political tempest. We even doubt if such an effort could be readily repeated; but at the same time everyone who studies the compost of the Party must admit that its astonishing response and capacity for energetic electioneering in a sudden emergency was a new discovery, and a new fact. However much one may have had faith that these things would happen no test of a sudden General Election had ever before confronted the Party, and its capacity for candidatures, and financial resourcefulness, was a point that was proved for the first time.

While rejoicing that all these things were so, and that our Party displayed a strength both surprising to its opponents and comforting to its adherents, one must not exaggerate the outcome of the election and confuse the chance result of it with the real return. Unthinking supporters may speak lightly of the 1923 election just as a triumphant upheaval that displaced one Government and replaced it by another. There is a tendency to forget the actual figures and the real moral of them. It is just as well to save our self-satisfaction, and to avoid over-confidence, by remembering that Labour after all is very substantially inferior in numbers to the Tory Party in the House of Commons, and a huge work remains to be completed ere Labour in Office spells Labour in Power.

After all, the 1923 election was rather a triumph over unheard-of difficulties than a great advance on the 1922 result. There was a much better distribution of our vote resulting in a much better relationship of seats gained to votes polled, and it was this factor that principally accounted for Labour's advance in representation. To blind ourselves to this fact is to shut out the possibility of an election, where on an actual increased vote we may drop in House of Commons' membership, and this danger is so real that we feel that we are doing a service in drawing attention to it. It is futile to look at only half our problem, and a consideration of the fact we have just drawn attention to emphasises the great need of further efforts in the constituencies we have not won—not to mention continued effort in those places which we hold,



As in 1922 an outstanding moral of the 1923 results is the leeway yet to be made by Labour in the agricultural divisions. The late election was certainly an improvement in this direction on its predecessor, but we are yet woefully behind. Yet there is hope; and the situation improves. A political revival is at present taking place in almost all parts of rural England. Labour's set-back in the County Divisions which befell it after the boom years of 1918-20 was largely due to our political dependence on the industrial movement among the farm workers. Following rapidly on the formation of branches of the Agricultural Labourers' Unions, political organisation also ran through the countryside, and in the few years mentioned political Labour like industrial Labour, experienced something like a boom. But we had no General Election to test our advance or give us any benefit from it, and when 1922 came the slump was complete. To-day, as we have said, there is a revival, but on almost every countryside it is purely political. We believe it will accomplish things. Certainly should industrial organisation revive, Labour's position at the polls will be vitally affected by triumphs that may be expected in agricultural divisions.

One aspect of the matter which we will not stay to discuss here, but which we hope to discuss on a future occasion, is the kind of political structure we should set up in the country districts. In the towns political organisation almost everywhere has followed, and been based upon industrial organisation. This was the method copied in the countryside during Labour's extensions in the years 1918-20, but, as stated above, to-day's organisation is mostly purely political, because perforce the industrial opportunities have gone. The problem is worth discussing as to whether some modification of the old procedure should be perpetuated in country organisation.

An important aspect of the 1923 election was that this was the first occasion when a Labour Government was seriously contemplated as an alternative to the existing one. This aspect of affairs and the further fact that in future Labour will be on the defensive as well as the offensive, vitally affects many considerations in electioneering. Gone are the cries we have echoed for 20 years, that Liberal-

ism and Toryism have failed, and Labour has never been tried. Gone, too, even is our latest cry, "Give Labour its chance." The wheels of fortune have been kind, but the swirl of them will rob us in the future of some first-rate arguments and good election cries. It is a loss we must seek compensation for.

Equally an outcome of the changed prospects of Parties is the seriousness with which our challenges are now taken, and the zealotry with which we are fought. In lots of places till quite recently, there was a certain contemptuous attitude regarding Labour opposition. Sometimes we were ignored, sometimes ridiculed, or at most misrepresented. Indeed, the election has yet to be fought in which the Labour programme was the issue. When our opponents cease to ridicule, and fail to misrepresent, and come down to real criticism of Labour's proposals, we ourselves, shall find the position somewhat strange and new to us.

And one of the morals of the late election is that it may be the last of the old order; the next may be fought on Labour's own ground. We hope that this will prove to be so, but we are not sure at the same time that we are all quite prepared for this development.

*(To be continued.)*

*(The above article is based on an address given by the Editor of the "Labour Organiser" to a meeting of Agents at Bristol. In the concluding article an examination is made of the various methods of electioneering adopted during the late election.)*

### MIDLAND AGENTS' DINNER

The annual dinner of the Midland District of the Labour Agents' Association took place on Friday, the 7th March at the Woodman Hotel, Birmingham.

A goodly number sat down to dinner after which a programme of enjoyment was gone through, together with a short toast list. The Right Hon. F. O. Roberts, M.P., Minister of Pensions, responded to the coupled toasts of "The Labour Party" and "The Parliamentary Labour Party," and in an effective speech spoke highly of the service and influence of the Agents in the progress of the Labour Party. Councillor C. C. Jones, of Smethwick, presided.

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**HALLS PROHIBITED FOR LABOUR  
MEETINGS**

The following extract from the March issue of the "London Labour Chronicle" shows that London suffers from an evil very common in the provinces, by which many otherwise suitable halls are withheld from the use of the Labour Movement, solely on grounds it would appear, of narrow insularism or religious bigotry. We can instance several towns where the evil is acute. After all, we are reaching a stage in social development when the people should be able to say that in neither the case of public halls or people's homes shall arbitrary powers rest in the hands of an individual or group of individuals. There is a sense in which halls and meeting places are public property, and it is time that we bestirred ourselves to challenge those who would exclude us from the use of places which, as citizens, we pay to police and protect.

"One would think that London would be well supplied with halls of various sizes in the central area available for all kinds of public meetings. In

practice, however, it is found that there is nothing available for political meetings between the Albert Hall and Queen's Hall on the one hand (and the latter is not very often available) and the Memorial Hall on the other.

**RIDICULOUS PROHIBITIONS**

"The great difficulty is that Central Hall and Kingsway Hall are refused for political meetings and we venture to raise seriously the question as to whether proprietors of important halls are acting in a public-spirited way by imposing such a veto. Harsh things have been said about politics and politicians, but surely it is ridiculous to conduct halls on the principle that political meetings are unfit, improper and against the public interest.

The stability of government depends to no small extent on freedom of public discussion, and the embargo against the letting of halls for political purposes, so far as we can gather, has no rational basis at all. Both Kingsway Hall and Central Hall, Westminster, are associated with religious bodies, and in these cases and in others within our experience in various London localities it would appear that it is largely religious bodies who object to their halls being used for political purposes, even though adequate commercial rents are paid.

Nonconformity, in particular, which has a great tradition so far as freedom of conscience and opinions are concerned, ought not to be guilty of such an unreasonable prohibition, and we suggest that it is time that the proprietors of these halls considered whether it is proper that their responsibilities to the public as a whole should be discharged in this narrow way and that constitutional political bodies should be denied freedom to express their views—for that is what the embargo amounts to.

"This article is critical of the policy of the proprietors of the Central Hall, Westminster, and Kingsway Hall, and we think it is only fair that we should invite them to make short statements in defence of their embargo. We are sending invitations to them accordingly."

Mr. W. H. Barton, late of Leeds and Littleborough, has been appointed full-time Secretary to the Liverpool Trades and Labour Council.



## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

*Correspondents are required to give their full name and address, not, however, necessarily for publication. Replies from general correspondents cannot be given through the post. It is imperative that where a reply depends on a statement of fact (such, for instance, as qualification of an elector to be on the register), the fullest information should be given.*

## DISPUTING THE CHAIRMAN'S RULING.

*Question.*—We have unfortunately developed in our Party the habit of challenging the Chairman's rulings, and on several occasions a good deal of confusion has occurred. Can you please say whether a member has any right to be constantly challenging the Chairman, and what is the procedure and how he should be dealt with?

*Answer.*—Apparently things are not all honey in the — Labour Party. Perhaps all that is required is a little stronger chairmanship, though the milk of human kindness would seem also to be lacking. Our correspondent will find his question fully covered in Citrine's "Labour Chairman," a copy of which should be in the possession of every Labour officer. It is a pity the Local Party has not thought of standing orders to deal with such a point as this. We quote Citrine's remarks on a similar situation in full:—

"The following Standing Order is in force in several bodies we are connected with, and aims at protecting the chairman from flippant challenges. 'The ruling of the chairman on any question under the Standing Orders or on points of order or explanation shall be final, unless challenged by at least four members, and unless two-thirds of the members present vote against such ruling. The number could, of course, be varied according to the size of the meeting. Under this procedure, the member who desires to dispute the ruling says: 'I challenge your ruling, Mr. Chairman.' The Chairman then asks: 'Are there three other members present who challenge my decision?' If not, the matter is at an end. If three additional members rise, the Chairman temporarily vacates the chair. The Secretary then reads the motion as: 'That the chairman's ruling be upheld.' The authorities are practically all silent as to whether discussion should

be permitted on the motion. One writer, however, says that the member who challenges the Chairman's ruling should be allowed to support his contention in a brief speech, and the Chairman should reply, no other speaker being allowed to intervene. We are of the opinion that this is a commonsense course, because speeches are only forbidden on formal motions usually, whereas the Chairman's ruling may be a vitally important matter. Precedent is dead against this, however, and we do not remember a single occasion when any speeches whatever have been permitted on such a motion."

## STARTING A LOCAL NEWSPAPER.

*Question.*—We have formed a small committee at — for the purpose of trying to start our own news sheet. Can you give us some guidance as to how we should set about starting a paper, or could you publish in the "Labour Organiser" a short article giving the information?

*Answer.*—Various hints have from time to time appeared in the "Labour Organiser" which would help our friends in the direction they want to move. We hope also to publish in an early issue an article from one of our friends who has been exceptionally successful, not only in establishing, but in making pay his Party's paper. Meantime, we recommend our correspondent to send to the Labour Party for a memorandum issued some time ago concerning "Localising the Labour Press Service." The memorandum referred to gives a good deal of confidential advice as to how to start a local newspaper with the Press Service as a basis. Costs are gone into, and a number of suggestions made with regard to printing, stereos, circulation, advertisements and so forth. Hints are also given to Editors, Advertisement Managers, and Circulation Managers, and altogether the information appears to be just what our correspondent requires.

## DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTION EXPENSES.

*Question.*—Can you please tell us what is the limit of expense in our Council Elections, and if any return of expenses has to be made?

*Answer.*—There is no limit to the total expenses in either an Urban or Rural District Council Election, nor

has any return of expenses to be made. A candidate may, therefore, except for certain specified limitations, spend as much as he pleases, and there is no effective check such as is imposed in what are presumed to be more important elections. There are, however, certain limitations on specific expenditure. Thus only one Committee Room is allowed to be hired with an additional Committee Room, if the number of electors is above 2,000, and so on for each 2,000 or part thereof. The persons employed for payment are limited to not exceeding two for a ward, and if the number of electors exceeds 2,000 one additional person may be employed for every 1,000 electors or part of a 1,000 electors. One polling agent may be employed in each polling station. Payment for the conveyance of electors to the poll is prohibited, as also is payment for the use of any house, land, building, or premises for the exhibition of any address, bill, or notice. Beyond the above limitations no limit exists.



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## LAW AND PRACTICE.

*[Under this heading are found brief and chatty explanations of points of commoner interest concerning the Law and Practice of Elections. Readers are invited to suggest points for notice herein, but are reminded that suggestions made may not necessarily be dealt with in the next issue.—Ed.]*

### WORDY WISDOM FROM H.M. JUDGES.

WHEN THE ELECTION BEGINS.—On this point the remarks of Justice Hawkins reported in 4 O'Malley and Hardcastle 123, are worth quoting as follows:—"It would not be reasonable to say that a man who contemplates in the year 1892, becoming a candidate in the year 1896 could not legally employ a person to do for him a variety of acts to ingratiate him with those whose votes and suffrages he intends to seek in some future year."

WHAT ARE MARKS OF DISTINCTION.—An interesting passage in Baron Pollock's judgment in the famous Walsall case (4 O'M. & H. 126) is as follows:—"The cards which were printed were not merely the card of invitation as of old, but bore the photographic likeness of the candidate, and words of invitation and encouragement to fight for him. In themselves they cannot be found fault with as being within the Act of Parliament under the words 'marks of distinction,' and so long as cards alone are used there can be no objection. I may even go further and say that sometimes the cards may be put in a man's coat or fixed to the outside of his hat, and yet not necessarily be 'marks of distinction.' But if the card is made specially adaptable to place in the hat as these cards were in fact, and if they were used for that purpose, then, after being ordered, having been used, and having been so described in the account, the person who pays that account, pays it knowing what it is. . . The legislature have decided to prohibit any mark of distinction, and any Party badge from being supplied and paid for by candidates or their agents."

THE VOTER'S INTENTION.—The remarks here quoted of Mr. Justice Hawkins in the famous Cirencester petition (4 O'M. & H. 194), have stood the test of time, and it is from the angle here expressed that to-day's decisions



are come to. The petition was heard in 1893 and it is interesting to record that the editor of the "Labour Organiser" was a youthful and interested listener at this famous trial, where after a prolonged scrutiny the judges (Hawkins and Vaughan Williams) found there had been an equality of voting and declared the election void.

"With regard to those votes as to which objections have been raised to the mode in which they were marked by the voters we have proceeded upon what we think was the true intention of the legislature in framing the Act of Parliament. We have, first of all, asked ourselves, whether the voter received his paper with the intention to vote. The mere fact that he has applied for and received a voting paper affords abundant evidence that such was his intention. Then we have looked at the face of the paper itself with a view to see whether or not the voter has by any mark clearly indicated the person for whom he wished and intended to vote; and if we have found such a mark we have upheld the vote, regardless of the very technical and, as we think, unsubstantial objections which have been allowed in some of the earlier cases to be found in the reports of election cases, our view being that we ought to interpret the Ballot Act liberally, and, subject to other objections, to give effect to any mark on the face of the paper which, in our opinion, clearly indicated the intention of the voter, whether such mark was in the shape of a cross or a straight line, or in any other form, and whether made with pen and ink, pencil, or even an indentation made on the paper, and whether on the right or the left hand of the candidate's name or elsewhere within his compartment on the voting paper. Of course, every deviation from the course pointed out in the rules tends to create difficulties which may be avoided by a rigid observance of it. It is highly prudent, therefore, to adhere to it, though we do not think it essential."

**THE LAW OF LIBEL.**—Lord Herschell giving judgment in *Alexandra V. Jenkins* (1892) 1 Q B 797 (C.A.) laid down the rule "That where the imputation is an imputation not of misconduct in an office, but of fitness for an office, and the office for which the person is said to be unfit is not an office of profit, but one merely of what has been called honour or credit, action

will not lie, unless the conduct charged be such as would enable him to be removed or deprived of that office." What political agents would like to know is whether membership of the House of Commons is in law "an office of profit" or "an office of honour or credit." The Chancellor of the Exchequer says members are *not* paid, and that their £400 is an expense allowance. Sir Hugh Fraser, a high legal authority, says that membership of the House of Commons is now a paid office, and infers that the law of libel confers the specially protected position before the law, such as is referred to by Lord Herschell, when distinguishing between the remedies open to the holder of an office of profit and one who merely holds an office of honour or credit.

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Mr. W. H. Oldfield has now been appointed agent at Gorton, Manchester, vice Councillor Sam Hague, J.P., who, as reported in the last issue of the "Labour Organiser," has now transferred to Bilston, Wolverhampton.

## OFFICIAL TEXT OF THE FRANCHISE BILL

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT (1918)  
AMENDMENT.

## A BILL

To amend the Representation of the People Act (1918) Amendment.

*Presented by Mr. William M. Adamson, supported by Miss Jewson, Miss Lawrence and Mr. Lansbury.*

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be printed, 18 January, 1924.*

## MEMORANDUM.

This Bill has for its principal object the conferring on women of the age of twenty-one and upwards the franchise both for parliamentary and local government elections.

The Bill also proposes to assimilate the parliamentary and local government franchises by abolishing the occupational qualification of women as the wives of local government electors, and to place the whole franchise for both sexes (other than university electors) on a similar basis of residence.

The Bill further proposes to abolish the statutory right of the universities to charge fees for registration, and to remove the disqualification in respect of election, membership or chairmanship imposed by the Local Government Act, 1894, as regards certain local authorities and boards of guardians.

The Bill extends to Scotland, but not to Northern Ireland.

## ARRANGEMENT OF CLAUSES.

## Clause.

1. Assimilation of male and female and parliamentary and local government franchises.
2. University franchise (women).
3. Right of person registered to vote.
4. University fees for registration.
5. Saving for validity and sufficiency of existing registers.
6. Repeals.
7. Removal of disqualification imposed by 56 & 57 Vict. c. 73. s. 46 (1) (b).
8. Restriction on extent.
9. Short title and construction.

## SCHEDULE.

## A BILL

To Amend the Representation of the People Act, 1918.

**B**E it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :—

1. For section one of the Representation of the People Act, 1918. (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act) there shall be substituted the following section, namely :

“ 1. (1) Every man and woman shall be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary and local government elector for a constituency (other than a university constituency) and a local government electoral area, respectively, if he or she—

- (a) has attained the age of twenty-one years ; and
- (b) has the requisite residence qualification ; and
- (c) is not subject to any legal incapacity.

“ (2) A person, in order to have the requisite residence qualification for a constituency or a local government electoral area—

- (a) must, on the last day of the qualifying period, be residing in premises in the constituency or the local government electoral area, as the case may be ; and

Assimilation of male and female and parliamentary and local government franchises.  
8 Geo. 5, c. 64.

“Parliamentary and local government franchises.”



(b) must, during the whole of the qualifying period, have resided in the constituency or the local government electoral area, as the case may be, or in another constituency or another local government electoral area, as the case may be, within the same parliamentary county or within a parliamentary county or parliamentary county contiguous to that borough or county, or separated from that borough or county by water not exceeding at the nearest point six miles in breadth, measured in the case of tidal water from low-water mark.

For the purposes of this subsection the administrative county of London shall be treated as a parliamentary borough."

2. Subsection (2) of section four of the principal Act shall have effect as though for the words "thirty years" there were substituted the words "twenty-one years."

3. For subsection (1) of section eight of the principal Act the following subsection shall be substituted, namely:—

"(1) Every person registered as a parliamentary elector for any constituency shall, while so registered (and, in the case of a woman, notwithstanding sex or marriage), be entitled to vote at an election of a member to serve in Parliament for that constituency; but a person shall not vote at a general election for more than one constituency for which he is registered by virtue of a residence qualification, or for more than one constituency for which he is registered by virtue of other qualifications of whatever kind."

4. So much of section nineteen of the principal Act as authorises an university to charge a fee for registration shall cease to have effect.

5. Nothing in this Act shall affect the validity and sufficiency for all purposes of all parliamentary and local government registers in force at the passing of this Act until the next registers to be prepared come into force.

6. The provisions of the principal Act specified in the Schedule to this Act are hereby repealed.

7. Section ten of the principal Act shall be read as though the following subsections were added at the end thereof:—

"(2) The disqualification in respect of election, membership or chairmanship imposed by paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section forty-six of the Local Government Act, 1894, is hereby removed, both as regards the local authorities mentioned in that section, including boards of guardians, and as regards metropolitan borough councils, and accordingly the cited paragraph is hereby repealed.

"(3) This section shall apply to any elections or appointments pending at the date of the passing of this Act, and to any membership consequent upon any such election or appointment, as well as to future elections, appointments and membership."

8. This Act shall not extend to Northern Ireland.

9.—(1) This Act shall be read as one with the principal Act, and may be jointly cited therewith as the Representation of the People Acts, 1918 and 1924.

(2) This Act may be separately cited as the Representation of the People Act (1918) Amendment Act, 1924.

#### SCHEDULE.

Section three.

Subsections (1) and (3) of section four.

Subsection (1) of section seven.

In subsection (2) of section seven the words "or the occupation of a house."

Subsection (4) of section seven.

Section nineteen from the words "The governing body of any such university may charge" to the end of the section.

Subsections (3), (4) and (5) of section forty-three.

University franchise (women).

Right of person registered to vote

University fees for registration.

Saving for validity and sufficiency of existing registers.

Repeals.  
Removal of disqualification imposed by 56 & 57 Vict. c. 73, s. 46 (1) (b).

Restriction on extent.  
Short title and construction.

## WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN ?

The following verses first tried on the Midland Agents at their annual dinner, where Mr. F. O. Roberts, M.P., was a guest, were next sung with great gusto at a celebration which took place in West Bromwich on Saturday, 8th March.

Tune : *Who Killed Cock Robin ?*

Who killed the Tories ?

We, cried out Labour ;

We've no fear or favour ;

We killed the Tories.

Hip, hip, hip, hip, hip, hurray,  
The Tories are astray  
And Labour comes to stay,  
Hip, hip, hip, hip, hip, hurray,  
Labour's on the upward way.

Who is the Premier ?

I, cried J. Ramsay

Macdonald, your fancy ;

I am the Premier.

Hip, hip, hip, hip, hip, hurroo,  
Ramsay's at the wheel,  
And steering straight and true,  
Hip, hip, hip, hip, hip, hurroo,  
We have put our faith in you.

Who lead the House ?

I, says Jack Clynes,

On my well-known lines,

I lead the House.

Hip, hip, hip, hip, hip, hurray,  
Johnnie leads the way,  
And will not go astray,  
Hip, hip, hip, hip, hip, hurray,  
Clynes will keep the foe at bay.

Who'll fill the " Gap " ?

Tom Shaw and Miss Bondfield,

The unemployed's stoutest shields,

We'll fill the " Gap."

Hip, hip, hip, hip, hip, hurroo,  
Tom and Maggie sure,  
Will smile upon the poor,  
Hip, hip, hip, hip, hip, hurroo,  
They the doleful " Gap " will cure.

Who'll see to Pensions ?

I, cried " F.O.,"

As I've done before,

I'll see to Pensions.

Hip, hip, hip, hip, hip, hurroo,  
Ex-Service men 'tis true,  
Trust Roberts for their due,  
Hip, hip, hip, hip, hip, hurroo,  
Roberts to their cause is true.

Who'll print the story ?

The " Herald " will daily,

Report news so gaily,

The Cock will glory.

Hip, hip, hip, hip, hip, hurray,  
The " Herald " now should stray,  
To all homes ev'ry day,  
Hip, hip, hip, hip, hip, hurray,  
Then the Cock will crow so gay.

Tune : *Rule Britannia.*

Then altogether, united let us stand,  
Labour, Labour now is governing this  
land. A.G.

## MAKING SUCCESS SURE IN THE WEST COUNTRY

### A SPLENDID MOVE AT EXETER

We are much indebted to some friends who have sent us the following particulars concerning excellent work which has recently been done in Exeter. The particulars will be encouragement and help to those in other places where the initial difficulties are possibly not half so numerous.

At the General Election the Exeter Labour Party fought the constituency for the first time. Although little attention had been paid to organisation Capt. Lothian Small secured 7,000 votes for Labour. This encouraging result made us feel that if we could only build up a proper organisation Exeter might very soon be represented by a Labour Member of Parliament.

Immediately following the election a social evening was arranged at Deller's, at which many helpers and supporters were able to meet our candidate. This function was a real success, and it was obvious that some steps must be taken to consolidate the results already obtained, and to ensure a healthy growth of members and party activity.

During the fight a host of workers had placed their services at the disposal of the local agent, and it was realised that if only some record could be kept of all those who were willing to work, and what they were prepared to do, it would greatly facilitate the work of organisation for all future fights, municipal and parliamentary. Card Index Secretaries were appointed to undertake the work of recording. A card was drawn up on the following lines, and an index of members compiled.



Name .....		Ward.....					
Address .....							
Subs Paid	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	
Willing to work as follows :—							
Speaking	Canvassing	Literature Distribut'n	Committee Room Work	Work other than at election times	Music	Research	Trades Unions or other Organisations
Remarks :—							

Arrangements were then made for a canvass of all those recorded on the index who had not hitherto definitely joined the party, and the result was

most encouraging. In addition to the ordinary membership form each member, new and old, was also canvassed with a special "Service Form." This

### EXETER LABOUR PARTY.

M.....

As a member of the Party you will have been pleased with the splendid fight that Captain Small put up at the recent election. Seven thousand votes was a splendid poll for the first attempt, but we want to double that number next time if possible. We believe that it can be done if every member will not only try and get others to join the party, but will do any good work that he or she is able to do to win Exeter for Labour next time.

We are asking every member to take on some definite work.

It is indicated below the kind that most needs doing. Will you kindly place a cross against the work you are prepared to undertake.

SPEAKING .....

CANVASSING.....

(If any special locality please indicate.)

DISTRIBUTING LITERATURE.....

Work at other than election times .....

MUSIC.....

If enough helpers are available we could form a Labour Choir.

COMMITTEE ROOM WORK.

Addressing envelopes, folding literature, etc.....

If you are a Co-operator, member of a Trade Union or other similar organisation, it will help if you will kindly indicate.....

It will help the organisation if members will pay their subscription for 1924 as early as possible.

*This Form will be called for or may be sent direct to the Card Index Secretary,  
H. J. C. FLOWER, 57, Barnardo Road, Exeter.*

form is based on the idea that those who believe in the aims of Labour should be prepared to do such work as they are able for the Labour Party. The information asked for on these forms was readily supplied, and the results were distinctly gratifying. A large number of members have definitely pledged themselves to work for the Party in various ways: Committee room work, canvassing, speaking, distribution of literature, etc.

The "Service Forms," when returned are real human documents. Many members, while expressing their willingness to do their best for the Party, are unable to work for various reasons. Some are too old, others have large families, many women have to go out to work all day and return to do their own home work at night; and in a few cases the employer is opposed to Labour.

In addition to the ordinary information required for ward activities certain particulars have been compiled which may be of interest to readers. While it is agreed that those who believe in the aims of Labour should do their best to serve the Party, it is necessary that work should be found that will suit people with various opportunities and temperaments. It isn't everyone who can speak or canvass, and to many even distributing literature and committee room work does not prove congenial. To meet the needs of these other forms of activity have to be found, and this led us to include "music" on the "Service Forms." The returns show that many of our members are willing to join a choir or help the Party in other ways with their music, and arrangements are being made for this side of our work. Then there are others who have time and inclination for reading with a taste for research work. These will be asked to read Hansard or the *Times*, and keep a careful record of the various activities of the Government and Opposition, having special regard to the attitude of our Tory M.P. In addition to national research it will be arranged for someone to keep a record of local events on our Council and other public bodies. These records should prove of inestimable value during Municipal and Parliamentary elections.

Notwithstanding the remarkable advance made by women in the realm of politics during the last few years there are still some who prefer to stay at home knitting or sewing. An attempt

will be made to organise these women into working parties, or to get them to work at home producing articles which could be sold at a bazaar or some other profit-making function.

It is of comparatively little use merely to enrol members, collect their subs annually, and then leave them alone until there is a General Election. If people are to be kept keen they must be given some definite and congenial work to do for the Party, and in building up an organisation this should be kept in mind all the time.

It is also essential that we should have regard to the social instincts of our members. Those of us who are used to working in organisations seem to acquire a love of business and committee meetings, and we are apt to forget sometimes that all people do not share these tastes. Since the election we have held three big social evenings, and so successful have they been that for the last one we had to take the largest hall in the city, when over 800 people were present. These socials are attracting a good deal of attention in the city, and are responsible for many new members.

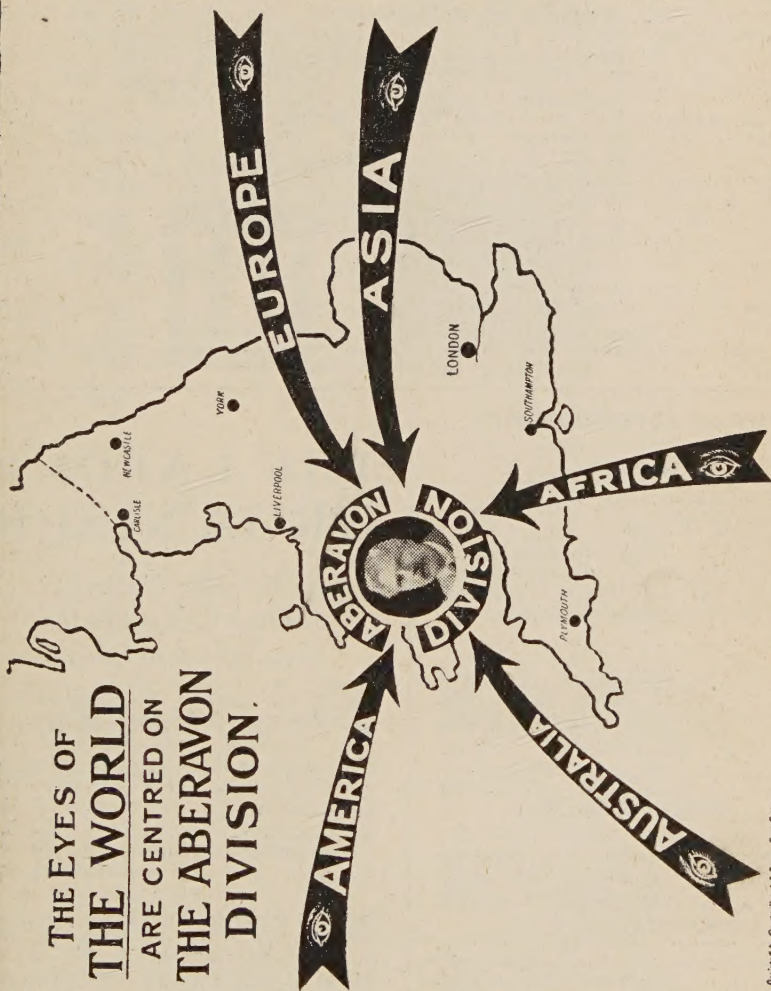
A good social atmosphere having been created we are now in a position to start Ward Organisation. With a view to inaugurating Ward Committees we have decided to form the seventeen wards in the city into six groups. We are calling together the individual members in these groups for the purpose of forming Ward Committees in the strong wards, the weaker ones remaining in the groups until they are strong enough to become independent units. At the conclusion of each initial group meeting there will be a social at which light refreshments will be provided free of charge. The profits that have accrued from the big central socials will be more than sufficient to cover the expenses incurred in connection with these group meetings.

It is gratifying to note that along with the development of the "machine" the keenness of the members is growing rapidly. We naturally attach a great deal of importance to this because we realise that a mere lifeless "machine," no matter how delicately constructed, can be of little use when the test of a fight comes along. We are therefore determined that our organisation shall be a real live one. In order that our

(Concluded on page 20)



THE EYES OF  
THE WORLD  
ARE CENTRED ON  
THE ABERAVON  
DIVISION.



Designed by *Cartoonist J.A. Evans Port Talbot*.

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(Concluded from page 18)

aim may be fully realised we need, however, the inspiration that comes from personal contact with our national leaders, and we sincerely hope that before long it may be possible to make arrangements for some of them to visit the West of England.

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